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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the origins and consequences of group activity, this paper discusses the effects of interest groups on school governance and policy in light of various theories. Data for the study were derived from interviews conducted in 1968 with board members and superintendents in 83 U.S. school districts. Major findings are that the intensity of left-wing groups is more predictable than that of the right, and that issue arousal and disposal are more reflective of left-wing energies than those of the right-wing. (ILR)

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INTEREST REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE*

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Emerging from the behavioral revolution of the years following World War II, after years of neglect, interest groups once threatened to assume the role of a "first cause" of public policy. A veritable flood of case studies, dealing with either a single group or a single issue, has appeared, all paying either tacit or overt homage to the patron saints of the "group approach," Bentley and Truman.[1] The difficulty with such studies is that most of them began with the assumption that interest groups were powerful (otherwise why would we study them). Further, no matter how laudable the case study method may be, it is extraordinarily difficult to reach valid generalizations from studies of single issues or single groups.

Whatever the validity of case studies, they were soon challenged by a new group of research efforts, relying more on comparative and (within the limits of measurement) systematic observations.[2] While no useful purpose would be served by an enumeration of the specific findings of this research, there was a theme common to it: interest groups are far less influential than the case studies would lead us to suspect. Thus, we have come full circle. Where interest groups were once thought to be the basic catalyst for the formation of public policy, they are now described as only one of a number of competitors for power and frequently the least effective combatants.

Some Problems in the Study of Interest Groups

In spite of the vast amount of ink spilled on the subject of interest groups, we have not really made very much progress. The fault lies not so much with theory as with data. It is very difficult to measure the contribution that interest groups make to the making of public policy and the resolution of policy disputes. Other political variables lend them-

selves much more readily to quantification, e.g., financial resources, malapportionment, party competition, etc. It is quite significant that the major efforts in developing systematic, empirical descriptions of the formation of public policy at the state level make absolutely no mention of interest groups.[3] Their exclusion is clearly the result of the fact that nobody has developed an inexpensive and reliable method of measuring interest group strength. For instance, both Zeigler and Froman used the assessment of political scientists as an indication of interest group strength, hardly the sort of measure in which much confidence would be placed.[4] In fact, the only effort--that of Francis--to develop a measure of the activity of interest groups in state politics (group competition rather than group effectiveness) is at odds with the conclusions reached by Zeigler.[5]

School Districts as Foci of Inquiry

This paper, while not pretending to solve the problems of measurement to the satisfaction of all, does offer the opportunity for systematic analysis using a relatively large number of units of analysis: local school districts. The use of school districts as units of analysis can be justified on grounds quite independent of their methodological advantages. Both in terms of formal governmental organizations and in terms of governmental office-holders, the school districts supply an inordinate proportion of all such organizations and officials in the United States. Further, as the recent brouhaha over sex education, dress codes, decentralization, tax support, and student revolutions demonstrates, people are apt to become quite concerned about educational policy. If the interest group theorists can make an argument in support of their assertions,

school districts provide an ideal setting. Indeed, Gross' study of Massachusetts suggested that interest groups were able, on occasion, to divide boards of education and weaken financial support.[6] Here again the evidence is sporadic and incomplete; it is not very difficult to find examples of interest groups accomplishing very little in educational politics.

Obviously, the time has come to make a stab at something more systematic. The questions which such an inquiry ought to address are really quite simple. We need to specify both the antecedents and the consequences of interest group activity.

The antecedents of interest groups, or more specifically the conditions leading to their formation, have recently been subjected to some critical assessment. The traditional position, as enunciated by Truman, is described by Salisbury as the "proliferation" hypothesis.[7] Briefly stated the argument is that social differentiation leads to specialization. Specialization, especially economic specialization, leads to a diversity of values and--under some not clearly specified conditions--formal organizations. To specify the conditions under which specialization results in the formation of formal organizations, Truman suggests that the distribution of an established equilibrium by disruptive factors (e.g., changes in the business cycle, technological innovation) leads disadvantaged groups to seek a restoration of balance by political activity.

Recently, Olson and Salisbury have challenged Truman's assertions by use of an exchange theory of the origin of groups.[8] They argue that entrepreneurs offer benefits (only some of which are political) to potential members in exchange for membership. Entrepreneurial activity is the first visible evidence of group formation. In essence, Olson and Salisbury look at formal organizations as business enterprises, and focus upon the

key role of the organizer. In so doing they have added an important dimension to Truman's offerings, for it is apparent from the case material they present that individual entrepreneurs play a significant role in group formation.

Yet they have not rejected either the proliferation or disturbed equilibrium hypothesis. It is clear, even in the Olson-Salisbury argument, that groups originate in response to unsatisfied demands on the part of potential group members. Although unsatisfied demands may be insufficient to stimulate group activity, they are functions of environmental change (proliferation) and unresponsive political systems (inability to restore equilibrium). Demands lie at the heart of interest group formation, even though groups ordinarily need an individual leader (entrepreneur) to channel unsatisfied demands.

We assert, then, that there is still merit in "traditional" group theory. One purpose of the paper is to see what use can be made of such theories, if we do not rely (as Truman, Olson, and Salisbury have done) on case histories of particular kinds of organizations.

With regard to the consequences of group activity, less serious theorizing has been done. As noted previously, most of the debate has centered around the empirical question of how much influence a particular group is able to achieve. We wish to address ourselves both to this kind of question and also to the more fundamental problem of the effect of formal organization upon other components of the political system. The question is, thus, one of both uncovering the influential groups in educational decision-making and assessing the overall impact of group activity upon the decision-making process.

The Data

To answer these questions we draw on interviews conducted in 1968 with board members and superintendents in 83 school districts throughout the continental United States. Because of our desire to link the school board study to a 1965 nation-wide investigation of high school seniors, their parents, social studies teachers, and principals, a decision was made to study those boards having jurisdiction over the public secondary schools covered in the earlier inquiry. It should be stressed that this is not a representative sample of all school boards; rather it represents boards in proportion to the number of secondary students covered. Since most districts are rather small, a straight probability sample of all boards would have yielded a preponderance of small districts. Thus the sample may be strictly defined as those public school boards having jurisdiction over a national probability sample of high school seniors in 1965. Although changes in school district boundaries and population in the 1965-68 interim affect the representativeness of the sample for 1968 purposes, these changes were judged to be slight enough to permit the extraordinary utility of linking up the school board project with the earlier study. The resulting sample consists of 490 individuals (weighted N = 638) serving on 83 boards (weighted N = 106).[9]

Assumptions about Measuring Interest Group Activity

In constructing a measure of interest group activity, we are engaging in a methodological and theoretical shift from earlier work on interest groups. Surveys of elites designed to elicit their response to interest groups typically report findings based upon the responses of individual state legislators, city councilmen, or other elected public officials.

We are less interested in individual responses than assessing interest group activity as part of a total political system. In addressing ourselves to the twin questions of the antecedents and consequences of group activity, we deem it advisable to conceptualize school board behavior as collective action. We are less interested in how individual board members behave vis-a-vis interest groups than with the impact of groups upon the policy outputs in a district. At the methodological level, we are moved to taking as our units of analysis the decision-making bodies rather than the individuals comprising these bodies. Hence the decision to seek the complete saturation of boards rather than selecting individuals from a potentially larger number of boards lends itself well to our research strategy.

The basic variable with which we will deal is interest group intensity. By intensity we mean the extent to which interest groups come to the attention of a governing body, in this case school boards. Intensity is purely an assessment of the quantity of interaction. By itself, it does not measure the technique or success of an interaction. What we are interested in measuring is the degree to which organizations play a significant role in the informational, cue-taking, system of school boards. For this reason it is appropriate to rely upon the responses of board members. While it might have been desirable to have interviewed interest group leaders, these data would not have captured the same phenomena. It has been found that group leaders tend to exaggerate the number of interactions with governmental officials; and since we are interested in the world of the board members, their perceptions are more directly relevant.

Our measure of interest group intensity is constructed from eight

open-ended questions in the interview schedule dealing with the activities of organized groups. These are the items in abbreviated form:

	Maximum Coded Responses
Organizations most interested in the board	3
Organizations from which the board seeks support	2
Organizations working for passage of financial referenda	3
Organizations working for defeat of financial referenda	2
Organizations critical of the board	2
Organizations attempting to influence teacher behavior	3
Organizations which defend teachers when attacked	2
Organizations which attack teachers	2
Total Maximum Possible	19

The measure of intensity is constructed by summing the number of valid responses for all respondents by board. That sum is divided by the number of respondents from each board. Thus, intensity is the mean number of organizations specifically mentioned by the members of a given board.

The range for this measure is .20 to 11.14; the mean is 3.92 and the standard deviation is 2.74. Table 1 shows how intensity is distributed over the boards in the sample.[10] What is perhaps most striking about the distribution is the skewness toward the lower end of the range, despite the presence of some boards in the very high ranges. If one is to judge by these figures there are large numbers of districts with relatively

Table 1

Distribution of Organizational Intensity by Boards

Range of Mentions	Number of Boards	Percentage of Boards
< 1	7	6.3%
1 - 2	23	21.7%
2 - 3	20	18.7%
3 - 4	15	13.6%
4 - 5	11	9.9%
5 - 6	8	7.9%
6 - 7	7	6.8%
7 - 8	2	1.6%
8 - 9	7	6.3%
9 - 10	3	2.6%
10 - 11	4	3.3%
> 11	1	1.2%
Total	108[a]	99.9%

[a]This N exceeds the actual weighted N of 106 due to rounding of non-interger weighted N's to whole numbers.

impotent formal spokesmen for interest groups. We stress formal because it seems highly probable that organized interests are sometimes represented in informal ways and that boards do not necessarily perceive such action as interest group activity. It is also true that the maximum possible total of 19 points is a very difficult one to achieve for two reasons. First, even though two and three responses were coded per question, the majority of respondents give only the one or two most salient organizaticns in response to a question. And some, of course, say no organizations meet the criteria of the question. Second, since board means are being computed, any taciturn or non-cooperative respondents would lower the board's overall average.

All in all, then, our measure may well understate the intensity of organizational activity vis-a-vis the school board. Even being generous, however, one would conclude that a sizeable proportion of districts are not boiling cauldrons of interest group activity. To the contrary, they seem to be functioning with a minimum of formal group life.

The Distribution of Group Activity

At this point in the development of the measure of group intensity, no categorization by kind of group was attempted. However, it is instructive to note the major categories of groups which come to the attention of boards; later in the essay we will return to this classification in order to ascertain whether or not particular kinds of groups are associated with particular kinds of antecedent societal conditions and policy outcomes. The most frequently mentioned groups are, as we would expect, those most intimately concerned with education, PTA's and teachers (Table 2). However, it is somewhat surprising that PTA's

Table 2

Organizations Mentioned by Board Members

Type of Organization	Mean Percent Mentions by Board Members[a]	Percent Range, by Board[b]
PTA	60	0-100
Teachers	32	0-100
Left-Wing, Civil Rights	29	0-100
Service Clubs	21	0-100
Business and Professional	17	0-100
Taxpayers	16	0-100
Right-wing	13	0-100
League of Women Voters	14	0-100
Religious	11	0-60
Citizens Advisory Committee	11	0-80
Political	5	0-50
Neighborhood	5	0-57
Labor	3	0-40

[a]This is the mean for all individuals in the sample, rather than a grand mean of board means.

[b]E.g., the mean range of PTA mentions varies from 0%--where no member of a board mentioned PTA in response to any of the questions--to 100%, where all members of the board mentioned PTA at least once.

so decidedly outrank teachers organizations, whose members have a more immediate interest in board policy--salaries, for example. Yet we should recall that teachers organizations have been less than militant in most areas. Although some of the larger cities contain quite active teachers organizations, in general they have not assumed a very political role. From the point of view of school boards, PTA's are more of a force to contend with. Not only do they consist largely of parents, they are also often laced with and frequently dominated by key administrators and teachers.

Of the remaining groups the more ideologically oriented ones take a back seat to those of an "establishment" tinge. Left-wing, right-wing, and taxpayer groups are those which assail the board from an ideological perspective. Of these, left-wing organizations (ACLU, NAACP, etc.) do much more lobbying than right-wing (veterans, John Birch Society, etc.) and the heralded taxpayer organizations, leaders of the now famous taxpayer revolt. Still, if we take the less militant organizations such as service clubs (Kiwanis, school boosters, etc.), League of Women Voters, citizens advisory committees, and the like, their impact (combined with the dominance of PTA's) tends to create the impression that the organizational climate in which school board decisions occur is somewhat oriented toward the status quo. The extent to which broader questions of educational policy are raised is probably dependent upon the activities of the left-wing, civil rights, right-wing, and taxpayer organizations, whose relatively high ranking might tend to balance off the numerical dominance of the status quo organizations.

Social Complexity and Organizational Intensity

In searching for the antecedents of organizational intensity in

educational politics, one can fall back comfortably upon theories of group activity and look first at some indicators of social complexity. Literature on the rise of organizations is replete with references to the displacement of primary by secondary groups as the society becomes more complex and heterogeneous.[11] Wirth's classic essay on the urban mode of life sums up such assumptions: "Being reduced to a stage of virtual impotence as an individual, the urbanite is bound to exert himself by joining with others of similar interests into organized groups to obtain his ends."[12] Virtually all the empirical research available supports at least the portion of Wirth's conclusion about associational activity, if not his assertion as to its cause. We should be on fairly safe ground in beginning our inquiry with the assertion that the complexity of urban life should produce more "groupness" and hence greater organizational intensity. Here again school districts prove to be a fertile ground, for as consolidation of small districts into larger ones continues, greater geographical and population heterogeniety has come even to the smaller districts.

In measuring social complexity, one would ideally compile a composite measure built with indicators corresponding to a model of what makes a geopolitical unit more or less complex. However such measures are either virtually impossible to obtain or too costly. Sociologists and demographers have demonstrated, however, that the larger and more urbanized the area the more complex the set of social institutions and patterns therein. Similarly, political scientists have shown, indirectly at least, that the set of political institutions and processes also vary in complexity with size and urbanism.

Two different, but to some extent interrelated, measures are employed

to describe the social and cultural complexity extant in the school districts' population. Metropolitanism is a dichotomized variable which divides the school districts between those not located in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and those located within one. District population is the total adult population within the school boundaries.

The bearing of these complexity measures on organizational intensity is shown in Table 3, which contains two measures of association: simple correlations, beta weights (standardized regression coefficients), as well as R^2, the total amount of variance accounted for by the predictor variables. This table, as will most other tables in this paper, presents the predictor variables arranged according to the strength of their beta weights.

The association between social complexity and organizational intensity is clearly in the direction one would have predicted. Both metropolitanism and district population continue to make substantial contributions to the association with the other variable in the equation controlled, as demonstrated by the sizeable beta weights. Taken together, nearly half the variance in organizational intensity is accounted for by these two indicators of complexity. Clearly dominant, however, is metropolitanism, i.e., whether the school district is within or outside an SMSA. In later portions of the paper, when complexity is entered into the equation with other categories of variables, metropolitanism will serve as the single indicator. A virtue of the Census Bureau's classification scheme is that SMSA's include not only central cities of 50,000 or more but also the remaining part of the county plus contiguous counties adjudged to be socially and economically integrated with the central city. For school districts this means that even some relatively small districts are

Table 3

Social Complexity and Organizational Intensity

Complexity Indicators	Simple r	Beta
Metropolitanism	.60	.44
District population	.55	.35
R^2	.47	

within the orbit of the metropolis. They absorb and are affected by the modes of group life found in the larger environment.

Mass Support, Complexity, and Interest Groups

Almost on a par with social complexity as an explanation of group activity is the notion of pressure groups originating to cope with alterations in the social and economic status of people with "shared attitudes."[13] This is the idea of disturbances in equilibrium as outlined in the introductory section. Urbanization, contributing to the creation of discontinuity of established patterns of interaction, is an example of the conditions which lead to such alterations in status. Examples of pressure groups originating to cope with some immediate problem and then persisting to deal with new matters are too numerous to elaborate upon at length. Consider, for one example, the organization of independent drug stores to cope with the problem of chain stores in the 1930's.[14] Once the initial problem had been resolved, the National Association of Retail Druggists continued its lobbying efforts, even though the tensions which led to its initial creation were somewhat abated. Once the organization has been given its start, other inducements must replace the initial tension.

It is certainly true, as Salisbury has argued, that there is a goodly amount of entrepreneurial skill required on the part of organizationally active individuals. Olson has persuasively argued that political motivations are insufficient to cement group loyalties. Nevertheless, stressful times should provide an initial stimulus for group activity. Groups are less active when there is less to fight about. Here again, school districts are particularly suitable for inquiry, for the late 1960's were undoubtedly

times of high tension in school district politics. Still, one would expect to find a considerable range of tension across school districts. Some districts experience recurring crisis while others are blessed with rather long periods of calm. Following the dictates of group theory, we expect that those districts with the highest tension will experience the highest levels of group activity. Conversely, those with the highest levels of harmony should be relatively free of the demands of organizations.

To assess the level of harmony in school districts we employ a measure of the relationships between citizens and boards. The measure looks at the public support rendered the school board, and is constructed in the following manner: a cumulative index score for each board was built from responses to three questions, one dealing with the degree to which the board takes unpopular stands, a second indicative of the prevalence of critics of the board, and a third describing the amount of congruency between the board's ideas of appropriate board behavior versus the board's perception of the public's ideas. The range of the index is .20 to 2.80; the mean is 1.71 and the standard deviation is .66.

Mass support has a strong negative association with organizational intensity ($r = -.75$). As the population becomes more supportive of the policies of the board, organized group activity diminishes. Groups clearly thrive in an atmosphere of conflict between the governed and the governors. It is entirely possible, indeed probable, that--once the level of public support has deteriorated to a level sufficient enough to generate fairly intense group activity--organizations exacerbate the loss of confidence in the board. Declining support and organizational activity undoubtedly feed off of each other. In an earlier point in the inquiry we included a measure of district consensus in the regression equation. Because the

measure of district consensus proved to be so weak a predictor in competition with mass support, it was excluded from further consideration. However, it is instructive to reveal the results of this effort because by so doing we can shed some light upon the interaction between mass support and organizational intensity. The beta between mass support and organizational intensity, with the latter independent, is .70. If we reverse these positions, making mass support dependent, the beta declines to .49. It is possible to argue, then, that both variables are dependent upon each other but that (given the magnitude of the betas), the stronger "causal" link is from mass support to organizational intensity.

To return to the argument of disturbance in equilibrium, we suggest that, as public confidence in board policy declines, the decline in confidence is articulated and given explicit focus by interest groups. They pinpoint, according to their own objectives and interests, the specific aspects of discontent to which they will address their efforts. It is probable, therefore, that decline in mass support becomes less generalized as group intensity increases. The interactive effect, then, is for organizational intensity to direct the generalized discontent toward the board, and also back to the publics which they serve.

A natural suspicion is that the strong association between mass support and organizational intensity is a function of social complexity. We could certainly assume that complexity and support vary inversely, given the strong association of both variables with organizational intensity and common sense description of urban life. Using metropolitanism as the measure of complexity, we find that both complexity and mass support retain their strong association with organizational intensity (Table 4). Of the two, mass support emerges as the best predictor, suffering less of

Table 4

Multiple Regression of Mass Support, Metropolitanism, and Organizational Intensity

	Simple r	Beta
Mass Support	-.75	-.58
Metropolitanism	.60	.30
R^2	.63	

a loss between the simple correlation and multiple regression. Since neither of the single relationships between mass support, metropolitanism, and intensity is seriously disturbed by the regression analysis, it is clear that each has a unique contribution to make to organizational intensity. The use of partial correlations rather than betas reveals a similar pattern.

The Role of Electoral Factors

Up to this point we have seen striking evidence in support of the importance of broad range socio-political factors upon group intensity. The next portion of the analysis uses as independent variables factors which are part of the more immediate political environment in which interest groups operate: the structure of electoral competition in the district. Heeding the advice of those who assess the impact of political institutions upon public policy, we are led to examine the relation between interest group activity and characteristics of the electoral system. One of the most frequently asserted dicta of group research, for instance, bears upon the link between interest groups and political parties. It is claimed (although Francis has recently introduced some evidence to the contrary) that interest groups thrive in political systems with weak political parties. We will test this assertion, along with those dealing with the importance of competition for office positions. The measures of competition for school board positions include de jure partisan versus non-partisan elections; the proportion of present board members who were either appointed to office, were encouraged to run by members of the previous board, or both; the absence or presence of contested seats in the last primary or general election for school board

prior to the beginning of the study; and forced turnover--the proportion of incumbents defeated in immediately previous elections. A party strength measure was constructed from individual responses in which each party was rated as strong (coded 1), not so strong (coded 2), and weak (coded 3). Measures of strength for each party were first constructed. The percentage of respondents in each category was multiplied by the coded value of that category. The resulting products were summed for each board, and that sum was then subtracted from 300. The result was divided by 2 in order to give a possible range of 0 to 100 for each party. The combined party strength measure was built by adding the squared values of each party and then dividing by 200 in order to maintain a 0-100 range.

Electoral variables fall well below social complexity and district harmony as predictors of organizational intensity. Overall, 10% of the variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the electoral variables, most of which can be accounted for by the presence of electoral opposition. Electoral opposition is the only variable which presents a respectable beta (.26), although there is a slight negative association between office sponsorship and organizational intensity (-.09). Further, one cannot help but worry that both electoral opposition and organizational intensity are in fact dependent upon social complexity and district harmony. One can well imagine that districts beset with a massive decay of support (predominantly metropolitan), in addition to generating interest group activity, would also generate opposition in school board elections. In fact, controlling for metropolitanism and mass support actually reversed the sign of the beta (-.13), indicating that once the effect of the confounding variables is accounted for, the more opposition one finds, the

less group activity will accompany it!

In any case, no electoral variable approaches the explanatory power of complexity and mass support. It is especially noteworthy to observe that measures of partisanship do so poorly. The existence of partisan or non-partisan elections, or whether or not there are strong political parties does not influence the activities of interest groups. Of course, the strength of parties generally might have more to do with the strength of other interest groups in local politics, excluding those which are interested in education. Still, the fact that partisan elections do not link to strong or weak interest groups cannot be ignored. Not surprisingly, when electoral competition variables are used in a regression equation with either metropolitanism or mass support, the electoral variables display trivial strength.

The final set of variables to be used in order to account for organizational intensity has to do with legal parameters which may constrain or channel the activities of organized groups. Students of interest groups have argued that the formal structure of government, rather than simply being a neutral framework, is one of the factors with which groups must reckon. For instance, the American federal system gave Negro organizations an opportunity to circumvent the hostility of Southern legislatures by turning to Congress and the courts. To cite another example, the committee system of Congress narrows the target of interest groups. With regard to educational politics, the efforts of good government forces to make the governance of schools uniform have not succeeded in erasing a variety of institutional frameworks. Among those to be considered are whether sub-district or at large elections are held; term of office; and whether coterminous referenda are held simultaneously

with school board elections.

It is perhaps unreasonable to expect this type of variable to have the same explanatory power as some of those already considered. At best legal constraints might enhance or inhibit a pre-existing relationship. Such variables do very little by themselves. About 10 percent of the variance in organizational intensity is accounted for. Nonetheless, the controlled relationships do suggest that legal constraints are associated with organizational intensity in a manner not at odds with what common sense would lead us to assume. For example, there is a positive association between the existence of coterminous referenda and organizational intensity (beta = .25). It is likely that, when all school related elections are held simultaneously, the climate of the elections is more heated than when elections are spread over a longer period of time. Such an explanation is especially likely given the current "taxpayer revolt." In such relatively controversial settings, more visibility would accrue to interest groups. Similarly, the modest association between district elections and organizational intensity (.10) indicates that, since such elections insure a heterogeneous representation on the board, they attract a wider range of group activities.

Electoral Factors as Intervening Variables

One is hard put to labor long over explanations of such modest relationships since, as we have noted, the explained variance is so trivial. Does this conclusion mean that such variables should be ignored? It is perhaps unfair to argue in such a fashion solely on the basis of amount of variance explained. It is true, of course, that when electoral variables and legal constraints are placed into a stepwise regression equation with

mass support and metropolitanism the electoral and legal variables do very poorly. Electoral variables and legal constraints enter the equation last and have very small betas. However modest this contribution, the association between these variables and organizational intensity refuses to disappear. When we compare the best legal and electoral variables with complexity and mass support, the former set of variables enter last, but are not appreciably diminished. This staying power is all the more impressive when it is realized that the complexity and mass support measures encompass a wide range of socio-economic and political processes which are essentially cumulative in nature. Such processes are reflective of more momentous aspects of political life than whether a school board is partisan or non-partisan.

Granting that the broader variables attain more over-arching importance, it is possible that the electoral and legal variables serve as mediating devices in the association between, say, mass support and organizational intensity. In order to test this notion, we separate out the subcategories of electoral and legal variables, holding them physically constant. Since mass support is the best single predictor variable, the association between it and organizational intensity will be observed for each electoral and legal variable. Because mass support is also strongly associated with metropolitanism, results with the latter variable controlled will allow us to assess the separate contribution of mass support under each physical control. Our interpretation will depend upon comparing the beta weights.

Turning first to legal constraints, we see that each has some effect upon the articulation between mass support and organizational intensity. The initial negative association between mass support and organizational intensity is depressed in at large electoral districts, those with shorter

terms of office, and those where no coterminous referenda are held. The case of electoral units is perhaps a case of a widening of the distance between organized groups and elected representatives, although it makes some intuitive sense to argue that larger geographical units should increase the number of possible groups. What appears to happen, however, is that smaller units exacerbate the negative association between mass support and organizational intensity possibly because district elections provide a clearer focus for grievances which are more likely to be neighborhood linked.

The effects of the competition structure reveals some apparent contradictions. On the one hand, the effect of mass support is strengthened when boards are elected on a partisan basis. On the other hand, the original association is strengthened when party strength is low. Our explanation for this contradiction is that party organizations may or may not have anything to do with school board politics. In strong party areas, it is possible that little interaction between parties and the educational system occurs. Yet there is clearly no such problem when we consider whether or not the board has partisan elections. When parties do enter the educational process, interest group activity is enhanced. Rather than operating in competition, interest groups and parties exist side by side. Here again is evidence that one or the other of these two forms of political organization need not dominate the transmission process to elites, as has been occasionally assumed by political scientists. What is likely is that partisan elections place the school board more squarely within the general political process, thus making the school board the target of the pressures which exist within the general political process.

Of the remaining variables, electoral opposition makes very little difference in the original association, but both forced turnover and office sponsorship have consistent effects. When forced turnover is low, and office sponsorship high, the correlation between mass support and organizational intensity is depressed. Competition acts as a mediating force in both cases, suggesting that competitiveness brings boards and interest groups into closer contact. Consider, for example, the effect of office sponsorship. When incumbent board members are able to perpetuate their influence by bringing like minded colleagues to the board, interest group activity tapers off considerably. Boards in these circumstances appear somewhat akin to closed corporations, insulating themselves from the hue and cry of interest group politics. In such cases, popular uprisings or expressions of discontent would come more slowly to the attention of the board through interest group representations. In the opposite situation, the board would not offer to interest groups the image of a self-sustaining dynasty and the more open impression might encourage group activity. On the other hand, when sponsorship is high, the board might develop a tendency to look internally more than externally for cues and information, making it less permeable.

In short, a simple model of association between less overtly political variables and organizational intensity is not adequate, for it is apparent that the electoral variables work in conjunction with mass support to produce distinct patterns of interest group activity. This analysis suggests that the appropriate treatment of these variables is not to stop after they have lost out in the competition with broader, more societally based variables; rather we should consider them as interacting with such broader variables in a systematic fashion. If we compare the overall results

Table 5
Relationship Between
Mass Support and Organizational Intensity, Controlling for Metropolitanism, according to relationship between Legal Constraints and Electoral Factors

	r	beta	Proportion of Sample
All Boards	-.68	-.58	100%
Election Area			
At large	-.64	-.42	72%
District	-.83	-.82	28%
Length of term in years			
2 or less	-.67	-.49	82%
3 or more	-.76	-.58	18%
Coterminous referenda			
yes	-.71	-.55	56%
no	-.68	-.49	44%
Partisanship			
no	-.70	-.50	59%
yes	-.83	-.72	41%
Office sponsorship			
high	-.45	-.34	51%
low	-.79	-.62	49%
Electoral opposition			
no	-.46	-.52	24%
yes	-.67	-.49	76%
Forced turnover			
no	-.69	-.44	53%
yes	-.70	-.60	47%
Party strength			
high	-.75	-.54	66%
low	-.79	-.72	34%

with the results for each subcategory we can see that in several cases the explanatory power of mass support is increased appreciably.

Specific Types of Organizational Intensity

Organizational intensity has thus far been treated without regard for particular varieties of groups. Now we will examine the corallaries of specific organizational types. It is reasonable to assume--given the different ideologies and membership of the various organizations--that the two major determinants (metropolitanism and mass support) will have markedly different impacts upon distinctive organizations. It is of course true that organization tends to produce counter-organization so that where the right-wing flourishes we might expect a counter-movement. We should not necessarily expect, however, that the existence of one kind of organization will automatically be associated with the existence of another, especially when such organizations do not have competing goals. In Table 6, a correlation matrix for the organizations under analysis is presented. It can be seen that there is considerable variation in the tendency of organizations to cluster together. For instance, the most pervasive organization, PTA, is associated with the existence of five of thirteen groups (teachers, League of Women Voters, left-wing, taxpayers, and right-wing), none of which bear any consistent ideological relation to the PTA. Yet the highest correlations exist between ideologically opposed groups, the right and left-wing organizations. Equally high is the correlation between right-wing and tax groups. The highest correlations are reserved for the groups with the strongest ideological committment, whatever the nature of that committment.

By way of illustrating this idea, examine the paired correlations

Table 6

Inter-correlations of Organizational Intensity Among Specific Types of Organizations

Type of Organization	PTA	Teachers	League of Women Voters	Left-wing, Civil rights	Taxpayers	Right-wing	Religious	Citizen advisory committee	Political	Business-professional	Service clubs	Neighborhood	Labor
PTA													
Teachers	.32												
League of Women Voters	.31	.22											
Left-wing, Civil rights	.25	.42	.43										
Taxpayers	.23	.28	.22	.37									
Right-wing	.26	.41	.21	.51	.50								
Religious	.05	-.00	.06	.16	.04	.21							
Citizen advisory committee	.12	.04	.04	.17	.10	.16	.11						
Political	.10	.14	.27	.26	.39	.24	-.02	-.00					
Business-professional	.10	.30	.26	.34	.40	.27	.02	.03	.12				
Service clubs	.16	-.10	.06	-.39	-.19	-.27	-.23	-.24	-.14	-.08			
Neighborhood	-.06	.10	.07	.30	.03	.15	.00	-.10	-.01	.26	-.24		
Labor	.11	.08	.12	.19	.03	.12	.05	.16	.04	.18	-.01	.26	

involving clubs, which consist of Kiwanis, Rotary, etc., and also the various local "boosters" clubs. In this case, all but two of the associations are negative. The service clubs are essentially non-ideological; even more so than most of the groups which come to the attention of the school board.

Somewhat similar to service organizations are the citizen advisory committees created by the board to improve public relations, assist in passing bond issues, and the like. While the frequency of this kind of group is, curiously, negatively associated with the existence of service organizations, it has no appreciable correlation with any other organization, suggesting an essentially non-threatening posture. Religious organizations, neighborhood groups, and labor organizations also exist in relative isolation. We speculate, then, that the more caught up a group is in a policy struggle, the more association there will be with other types of groups. Nevertheless, Table 7 suggests that different kinds of organizations thrive in different kinds of environments.

Let us examine Table 7 from the point of view of determining whether metropolitanism or mass support is the best predictor. Organizations listed above the dotted line are more affected by metropolitanism, those below more by mass support. Turning to metropolitanism, we see that this variable is the best predictor of the activities of left-wing and civil right groups but does little toward predicting the activities of right-wing groups. Mass support, in contrast, does more toward predicting the activities of right-wing groups, with metropolitanism taking a markedly inferior position. Thus left groups are less dependent upon widespread hostility whereas the complexity of the environment is of little value in helping us to understand right-wing organizations. In a similar vein,

Table 7

Sources of Organizational Intensity: Metropolitanism and Mass Support

Type of Organization	Simple r	beta	R^2
PTA			
Metro	.23	.20[a]	.06
Mass support	-.15	-.05	
Teachers			
Metro	.51	.34	.34
Mass support	-.50	-.32	
League of Women Voters			
Metro	.29	.29	.08
Mass support			
Left-wing, Civil rights			
Metro	.63	.46	.48
Mass support	-.57	-.34	
Business-professional			
Metro	.38	.30	.16
Mass support	.31	-.15	
Taxpayers			
Mass support	-.45	-.42	.20
Metro	.28	.05	
Right-wing			
Mass support	-.52	-.45	.29
Metro	.38	.14	
Religious			
Mass support	-.17	-.11	.04
Metro	.17	.11	
Citizens advisory committee			
Mass support	-.25	-.19	.07
Metro	.22	.12	
Political			
Mass support	-.33	-.33	.10
Metro[b]			
Service clubs			
Mass support	.33	.23	.13
Metro	-.31	-.19	
Neighborhood			
Mass support	-.32	-.25	.12
Metro	.27	.14	
Labor			
Mass support	-.18	-.19	.03
Metro	.10	-.02	

[a]Betas for "Metro" are with "Mass support" controlled, and vice versa.

[b]If the tolerance level is very small, the second variable is virtually a linear combination of the variable(s) already in the equation. Inclusion of such a variable is very often the result of random error in measurement and is difficult to interpret in a meaningful way. Stepwise regression does not allow such variables to enter the equation.

mass support has a strong negative association with taxpayers associations, another conservative group, and metropolitanism has a trivial impact. It would seem that right-wing organizations are quicker to seize the initiative in periods of unrest, and do so whether or not the complexity of the community is generally conducive to organizational activity.

It should be noted that the predictions for all ideological groups--irrespective of the direction of the ideology--are stronger than those for other kinds of organizations, with political organizations also showing a strong pattern. The more political or ideological the organization, the greater the response to a decline in mass support. There is also a rather healthy relation between mass support and teacher organizations, but it is probable that--in this case--the organizational response is more defensive. As mass support declines, public acquiescence in school board policy declines, stimulating teachers organizations into a more active role.

Mass support appears to be least determinative when the organizations are supportive, e.g., PTA and League of Women Voters. In fact, when we examine the role of service organizations we notice that in this case the association between mass support and intensity is positive, the single exception to the rule. The more supportive the public, the greater the activity of service organizations. As we noted, service organization activity is negatively associated with the existence of other organizations. Here we find they are also a clear exception. Their role is one of local booster and they thrive when the public is in a mood to boost. In a sense, the positive relationship between service organizations and mass support is an extension of the low negative association for PTA's. Both organizations differ fundamentally from the ideologically and politically combative

organizations.

A similar point can be made by examining the R^2 values for the various kinds of organizations. R^2 for ideologically oriented groups tends to be higher than for such groups as PTA's, League of Women Voters, and the like. The more a group tends to be an agent for the maintenance of things as they are, the less we can explain about this occurrence. It is also instructive that R^2 for any single type of organization is considerably lower than the .63 found for the overall measure of organizational intensity, using the same two predictor variables. This suggests a strong threshold effect. The likelihood of a district generating intensity across a variety of interest groups increases greatly according to both social complexity and mass support whereas the likelihood of intensity for a given type of organization is customarily only modestly affected. Thus while two districts of varying complexity and mass support may both have the same level of intensity by one type of group, they are unlikely to have the same level of intensity when various types of organizations are considered. There is a more clearly defined threshold of circumstances and preconditions for the overall level of group life.

Some Consequences of Organizational Intensity: Issue Arousal

If we view interest groups as bargaining agents in the allocation of public resources then we need to know what difference they make in the way school districts conduct their business. In the previous section of the paper we made the point that interest groups thrive when mass support for the school board is low. Does it therefore follow that group activity contributes to the heightened tension which accompanies a decline in public confidence? To put the question into another perspective, imagine

a school district suffering a decline in public support. Even though interest groups will probably become active in this district, does their activity translate the loss of confidence into observable phenomenon? If not, it would make little difference to the school board if mass support is low, since the board would have little evidence of the state of public opinion.

The interview schedule contains some questions designed to tap the degree of "issue arousal" and "issue-disposal" within the district. Some districts operate with little difficulty while others are plunged into perpetual crisis. The 1960's were years in which the school districts faced unprecedented demands, but even in such a heated climate, there were some districts which enjoyed relatively smooth sailing. Our question deals with the extent to which interest groups contribute to a tense atmosphere within the district, in contrast to the main question of the previous sections which considered the conditions which contribute to organizational intensity.

We have selected the following items as measures of issue arousal.

Financial Defeats: Whether a district has seen a bond issue or tax referendum go down to defeat in the last three years.

Racial Problems: The percentage of board members who say the district faces racial problems.

Financial Problems: The percentage of board members who say the district has trouble in achieving an adequate level of financing. There is only a moderate (.36) correlation between this item and financial defeats, suggesting that close but successful financial elections still make board members think in terms of troublesome situations.

Teacher Criticism: The percentage of board members who indicate that teachers' classroom performance has come under attack.

Firing of Teachers: The percentage of board members who are aware of tenured teachers being dismissed because of their classroom behavior.

Superintendent Turnover: Whether the superintendent did not or did leave involuntarily in the past three years.

The items give us a fairly broad range of issues, dealing with finances, teacher behavior, racial tension, and school management. Some (e.g., financial defeats) are clearly "outputs"; that is, they provide tangible evidence of the state of tension in the district. The others have reference more to a general level of tension. Even though the items have a somewhat different portent, it was deemed advisable to construct a composite index of issue arousal, in order to sketch in the general role of interest groups in this phenomenon. The index of issue arousal was constructed in the following manner. For each board, the percentages of members answering in the affirmative on the teacher criticism, firing of teachers, financial problems, and racial problems questions were summed. One hundred was added to a board in which one or more financial referenda was defeated, and one hundred was added if the superintendent left involuntarily.[15] These sums were divided by four if no budget referenda was held and there was was missing data on superintendent turnover, by five if one of the above conditions held, and by six otherwise. The resulting index ranges from 0 to 100 with a mean of 40.19 and a standard deviation of 23.0. The composite index reflects rather well the essence of the individual items, as is indicated by the following item-index

correlation:

Racial problems	.69	Teacher criticism	.56
Financial problems	.68	Superintendent turnover	.52
Financial defeats	.65	Teacher firings	.46

The occurrence or outcomes of these six issues become the dependent variables in our attempt to isolate the effects of organizational intensity. Our procedure is to enter organizational intensity as an independent variable into the regression equation, along with mass support and metropolitanism. The last two variables were selected because of their powerful performance in predicting organizational intensity. If intensity is to make an independent contribution to issue arousal, it should have to do so under conditions which put it to a severe test. As we can observe in Table 8, both mass support and organizational intensity make an appreciable impact upon issue arousal. As mass support declines and organizational intensity increases, the issue climate of the school district becomes heated. Surprisingly, the complexity of the environment makes virtually no impact upon issue arousal once the contribution of the other two factors is taken into account.

We have previously mentioned the affinity between mass support and organizational intensity; we now add that, as a consequence of their interaction, a school district is likely to find itself immersed in a climate of hostility <u>whether or not the environment is socially complex</u>. The latter point is especially significant in view of the earlier discussion of the link between complexity and organizational intensity. In terms of the <u>consequences</u> of these patterns, we are far better off knowing the level of organizational intensity than knowing the degree

Table 8

Conditions Associated With
Issue Arousal

	r	Beta
Mass support	-.66	-.39
Organizational intensity	.66	.38
Metropolitanism	.41	-.03
	R^2	.50

of complexity.

We should be careful to disclaim any clearly established causal chain in these events. Since neither issue arousal nor organizational intensity occur chronologically prior to the others, at least logically if not empirically, we might argue that the heating up of the debate over issues leads to organizational intensity rather than the reverse. However, when we construct the same regression equation with organizational intensity instead of issue arousal as the dependent variable and issue arousal as one of the independent variables, the beta coefficient for issue arousal is .22. That is, issue arousal predicts organizational intensity less well than intensity predicts arousal (.22 vs. .38). Still, we do not wish to make too much of the argument simply on the basis of regression coefficients.

If one were to examine the "real world" of educational politics in local districts it would probably be very difficult, indeed impossible, to construct a causal chain. Perhaps it is more fruitful to think in terms of interaction between issue arousal, decline of mass support, and organizational intensity, each contributing to the other.

The Contributions of Specific Organizations

It is certainly true that some groups are more active--and effective--than others. Given the nature of the dependent variable, issue arousal, we might expect that the more ideologically oriented groups would have more of an impact. Since the goals of left or right-wing groups differ fundamentally from the goals of, say, service organizations, does it necessarily follow that their effect will differ? To get at this question, we perform a regression using mass support, metropolitanism, and each

organizational type individually. When this is done, the only groups whose betas are not diminished to the point of triviality are: left-wing (.32), teachers (.18), and right-wing (.13). These diminished coefficients demonstrate the importance of multiple versus simple types of organizations in generating issue arousal. What an intense single group might not do, a combination of them will.

Clearly, the most significant type of group, insofar as issue arousal is concerned, is the left, far more so than the right. As expected, the dominant groups are ideological; but this does not tell us why the left is so much more associated with issue arousal than the right. It is useful here to recall that left-wing groups are more <u>active</u> (according to the perceptions of board members) than right-wing groups; perhaps sheer activity at least partially explains their greater impact. Yet left-wing groups are <u>not</u> more active than teachers organizations, for instance, and yet they have greater impact. Indeed, if we perform a regression using <u>only</u> organizational types as independent variables (with the index of issue arousal as the dependent variable), left-wing groups rank first, and right-wing groups last! The beta for left-wing groups is roughly five times that of right-wing groups (.46 vs. .09).

One possible explanation is that the left-wing groups cast a wider net than the right-wing groups--and hence are effective on more issues. Let us turn, therefore, to an examination of each issue area, considering first the impact of organizational intensity and then turning our attention to the effect of each group upon each separate issue area.

Table 9 indicates that organizational intensity is the best predictor of financial defeats, racial problems, and financial problems. For the

Table 9

Variables Associated With Specific Issues

	Simple r	Beta
Racial Problems		
Organizational intensity	.62	.33
Mass support	-.58	-.24
Metro	.51	.17
R^2	.44	
Financial Problems		
Organizational intensity	.50	.38
Metro	.37	.10
Mass support	-.41	-.08
R^2	.26	
Criticize Teachers		
Mass support	-.51	-.36
Organizational intensity	.47	.21
Metro	.31	-.01
R^2	.28	
Fire Teachers		
Mass support	-.38	-.32
Metro	.11	-.18
Organizational intensity	.33	.20
R^2	.17	
Superintendent turnover		
Mass support	-.28	-.45
Metro	-.02	-.22
Organizational intensity	.15	-.07
R^2	.12	
Financial Defeats[a]		
Organizational intensity	.26	.34
Mass support	-.15	.10
Metro	.14	-.02
R^2	.07	

[a]Based only on districts where a financial referenda had been held in past 3 years.

other issues--those dealing with teachers and superintendents--there is a greater link with mass support, but organizational intensity still makes an appreciable contribution. The pattern, then, is for issue arousal to increase with proportional increases in organizational intensity. One is hard presses to assert a causal chain with organizational intensity existing logically prior to issue arousal. It might just as well work the other way; racial problems, for instance, motivate interest groups to become involved. Yet the regression coefficients with organizational intensity treated as dependent upon the issue arousal items are uniformly lower than those presented in Table 9. To take one example, the beta involving racial problems as the dependent variable and organizational intensity as the dependent variable is .21, compared to .33 when the order of the variables is reversed, as is the case in the table. Thus, there is clearly a reciprocal effect operative; organizational intensity increases board members' awareness of, say, racial problems, but as the problems become more apparent organizational intensity increases. Nevertheless, there is more "cause" if we adhere to the model suggested in the table.

We argue, then, that financial defeats, racial problems, financial problems, teacher criticism, and the dismissal of teachers and superintendents are all made more likely if interest groups are active. The more action on the part of interest groups, the more trouble there is for the school board. Little wonder that school board members shudder when group action proliferates.

Specific Groups and Specific Issues

The final question is whether certain types of groups are active

(and effective) in certain kinds of issue areas but not in others. It is quite possible that groups will concentrate their energies in a few areas of controversy. Taxpayers associations, for example, are likely to be more involved with financial issues than the dismissal of teachers. In Table 10 we have entered each individual organization into a separate stepwise regression equation along with mass support and metropolitanism. The number in parentheses tells when the individual organization entered the equation compared with the entry stage of support and metropolitanism. As the table indicates, there are more groups which enter the equation first on the issue of financial defeats. Teacher groups, citizen advisory committees, neighborhood organizations, taxpayer organizations and the League of Women Voters all have a significant impact upon the tendency of the district to lose in financial elections.

It is apparent that not all of these groups take the same position on financial issues. Presumably, the League of Women Voters and teachers organizations are most likely to be in favor of passage of the issue while taxpayers associations are not. Yet the direction of their influence is the same irrespective of the ideology of the group. What seems to be happening is that such groups heat up the election environment and, possibly, stimulate a higher turnout. Generally, higher turnouts spell doom for school financial elections since they draw a disproportionate turnout from negatively-inclined lower status people.

Ironically, then, the result of activity by pro-school forces and anti-school forces is the same. The effect, if one can call it that, seems to be quite independent of the goals of the organization. A similar sort of effect can be observed with regard to racial problems, where left-wing and civil rights groups have the greatest impact. Surely

Table 10

The Contributions of Organizations to Specific Issues
Controlling for Metropolitanism and Mass Support

Type of Organization	Financial Defeats	Teacher Criticism	Fire Teachers	Financial Problems	Race Problems	Superintendent Turnover
	beta	beta	beta	beta	beta	beta
PTA	-.04 (3)	.01 (3)	.13 (2)	-.07 (3)	-.03 (3)	-.17 (3)
Teachers	.24 (1)	.19 (2)	.11 (3)	.11 (3)	.06 (3)	-.07 (3)
Left-wing, Civil rights	-.06 (3)	.14 (2)	.20 (3)	.32 (1)	.36 (1)	.09 (3)
Service Clubs	.18 (2)	.12 (2)	-.16 (2)	.05 (3)	-.02 (3)	-.04 (3)
Business-professional	.09 (2)	-.03 (3)	-.11 (2)	.09 (3)	-.04 (3)	.03 (3)
Right-wing	-.05 (3)	.11 (2)	.28 (1)	.10 (3)	.10 (3)	-.07 (3)
League of Women Voters	.19 (1)	-.16 (2)	.05 (3)	.02 (3)	.08 (3)	.11 (3)
Religious	.10 (2)	-.10 (2)	.21 (2)	-.10 (3)	.07 (3)	.15 (3)
Citizen Advisory Com.	.26 (1)	.05 (2)	.21 (2)	.08 (3)	.01 (3)	-.21 (2)
Political	-.02 (3)	-.02 (3)	.01 (3)	*	-.02 (3)	.23 (1)
Neighborhood	.22 (1)	.02 (3)	-.24 (2)	-.04 (3)	.03 (3)	.12 (3)
Labor	-.15 (2)	.05 (2)	-.17 (2)	-.00 (3)	-.05 (3)	.03 (3)
Taxpayers	.18 (1)	-.13 (2)	.20 (2)	.18 (2)	.02 (3)	.07 (3)

*If the tolerance level is very small, the variable is virtually a linear combination of the variable(s) already in the equation. Inclusion of such a variable is very often the result of random error in measurement and is difficult to interpret in a meaningful way. Stepwise regression does not allow such variables to enter the equation.

such groups seek to alleviate, rather than exacerbate, racial disputes but the result is in the opposite direction. What probably happens in this case is that the racial problem has been there all along, and group activity simply brings it to the surface. Hence the school board defines it as a problem because interest groups have made the problem salient. Therefore, it is probably more accurate to say that left-wing groups, in seeking more integration, hiring of black teachers, and the teaching of black history, for example, crystallize an issue which may lead to its partial resolution. In fact, there is only a single example--that of right-wing groups and the firing of teachers--in which the goals of the organization and the result of its activity are compatible. In this case, right-wing groups have harassed school boards to get rid of various kinds of allegedly subversive teachers; and the table indicates that they have done a good job. It is less certain that political organizations, the most influential type with regard to the firing of superintendents, actually seek that goal. However, it is significant to observe that the link between political organizational activity and superintendent turnover is clearly unusual for political organizations in that their activity and influence is generally quite low. Their impact upon superintendent turnover provides evidence that, from the point of view of the superintendent, keeping the schools out of politics (at least, the partisan variety) is good politics. The more partisan entanglements, the greater the superintendent turnover.

Inter-Group Competition

These data suggest that the left does have an effect on more issues than the right, which has impact only in a single issue area. It is

perhaps unfair to require that all groups compete in an equation with mass support and metropolitanism if we want to make a point about the distribution of influence. For instance, even though in a given issue area a group has less impact than mass support or social complexity, it still might be the most efficient group <u>in competition with other groups</u>.

If we enter all groups into the stepwise regression equation for each issue area, this will give us a better notion of differential organizational impact. In Table 11, the entry of the group into the equation is listed next to the beta coefficient. If we concentrate our attention on the first three groups for each issue area, we can observe that there is very little overlap between issue areas. Only four types of organizations appear in the top three more than once. They are: religious (2), citizens advisory committees (2), left-wing (3), and teachers (3). Further, if we examine those groups which rank first, only left-wing groups repeat.

We should not necessarily argue that emergence as the best predictor is equated with influence in a planned direction. As we have noted, the impact of groups upon a given issue sometimes exists irrespective of its intentions. Nevertheless, we do gain an insight into the distribution of impact and it also helps to explain why left-wing groups have a greater overall influence than right-wing groups; they have impact upon more issue areas.

One can interpret this evidence in one of two ways. On the one hand, the fact that <u>most</u> organizations have impact upon a single issue area argues for a pluralistic interpretation. On the other hand, the fact that two types of organizations (left-wing and teachers), dominate half the issue areas, leaving the remaining groups to contest for influence in

Table 11

Contributions of Specific Organizations
in Specific Issues

Type of Organization	Financial Defeats	Teacher Criticism	Fire Teachers	Financial Problems	Race Problems	Superintendent Turnover
	beta[a]	beta	beta	beta	beta	beta
Citizen Advisory Com.	.41 (1)	.12 (9)	.18 (2)	.14 (6)	.08 (8)	-.18 (5)
Neighborhood	.47 (2)	.11 (8)	-.09 (8)	*	.13 (6)	.12 (4)
Service Clubs	.35 (3)	.24 (4)	-.05 (10)	.19 (5)	.11 (9)	.03 (11)
Labor	-.29 (4)	.02 (12)	-.14 (3)	-.03 (9)	-.10 (5)	.09 (7)
Taxpayers	.30 (5)	-.13 (7)	.20 (5)	.20 (2)	.07 (11)	*
Religious	.21 (6)	-.04 (11)	.17 (4)	-.06 (8)	.12 (3)	.22 (2)
PTA	-.18 (7)	-.06 (10)	.04 (11)	-.19 (4)	-.11 (4)	-.21 (3)
League of Women Voters	.21 (8)	-.34 (3)	-.03 (12)	-.11 (7)	-.06 (10)	.03 (9)
Teachers	.19 (9)	.23 (1)	.05 (9)	.12 (3)	.18 (2)	.11 (6)
Right-wing	-.15 (10)	.20 (5)	.19 (1)	.02 (11)	.05 (7)	.09 (8)
Left-wing	.11 (11)	.40 (2)	.12 (7)	.49 (1)	.55 (1)	.03 (12)
Business-professional	.05 (12)	*	-.15 (6)	.02 (10)	-.07 (12)	-.03 (10)
Political	*	.15 (6)	*	-.02 (12)	.02 (13)	.32 (1)
R^2	.46	.32	.32	.34	.46	.23

[a]Controlling for the effects of the other organizations in the table.

*If the tolerance level is very small, the variable is virtually a linear combination of the variable(s) already in the equation. Inclusion of such a variable is very often the result of random error in measurement and is difficult to interpret in a meaningful way. Stepwise regression does not allow such variables to enter the equation.

the others, suggests a concentration of influence. Further, it is possible that in a given district at a particular point in time, a single issue (and hence a single group) is most salient. Suppose, for example, that there is a struggle to oust the superintendent; then political organizations will appear most influential. If there is an effort to get rid of allegedly subversive teachers, then right-wing groups will dominate. In short, neither a concentrated power structure nor a pluralistic one receives unequivocal support.

The point should again be made that organizational intensity might be--in some cases--a consequence of an inflamed issue area. The dominance of citizens advisory committees when the district is plunged into financial crisis is a clear example of this. Faced with financial disaster, a board will likely appoint a blue-ribbon citizen advisory committee. Or consider the association between teacher criticism and teacher organization activity, which must surely be interpreted as a defensive reaction! There are, of course, some negative associations between activity and issue areas: PTA efforts are actually negatively associated with superintendent turnover; labor organization intensity with teacher firings, and League of Women Voters activity with teacher criticism. These are reasonably clear examples of the intended consequences of group effort and the actual consequences of their efforts being congruent. In general, however, most relationships are positive, no matter what the intention of the organizations. This is especially noteworthy in the case of left-wing organizations, which can hardly be assigned to "cause" social and financial problems. This fact tends to reduce somewhat the dominance of left-wing over other kinds of organizations. Still, it can be argued that, when the going gets rough, the left assumes a more active role.

Conclusions

As identified in the introductory section, we are dealing with two unresolved problems in the study of interest groups. On the one hand, there is the empirical question of the origins and consequences of group activity. On the other hand, there are serious problems of measurement if we are to move toward providing at least tentative answers to the empirical questions.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the resolution of these kinds of problems by identifying the sub-system under investigation as the unit of analysis, rather than the individuals who comprise the sub-system. This methodological decision places the study in a somewhat different light than previous studies of interest groups. By using school boards rather than school board members as units of analysis, we were able to develop a measure of organizational intensity which could then be linked with other systemic variables. The cost of such an operation should not be ignored. We are unable to take into account the potentially significant behavior of the leaders of particular groups, and the unique behavior of individual board members. Thus we can provide no direct answer to the Salisbury-Olson theories of interest group origination. Nevertheless, we were able to account for the intensity of group activity by using indicators which made no reference to individual behavior. Perhaps the unexplained variance in our equations can be accounted for by the activities of individual entrepreneurs, as is suggested by Salisbury and Olson.

With regard to the antecedents of group activity, the "traditional" theories which Salisbury and Olson seek to modify hold up rather well. Both social complexity and the lack of mass support are quite helpful in

predicting organizational intensity. It is with the consequences of group activity that traditional group theory leaves much to be desired. Here we have tried to go beyond the linking of a specific group with a single policy outcome; we have sought to explain the general role of interest groups in defining the climate of issue arousal in school districts. In so doing, we can isolate two general categories of organizations. First there are non-issue specific groups, such as PTA's, League of Women Voters, and service organizations. These organizations provide support for the on-going system, but inject little conflict into the system. They constitute a resource from which decision-makers may draw in times of crisis. Then there are ideological and issue specific groups whose role is to inject conflict into the system and to make conflict salient for decision-makers. Intense activity by such organizations usually has an effect, but not necessarily the effect that such groups desire. The unanticipated consequences of such groups may be a result of the fact that they have the influence to make an issue salient by expanding the scope of conflict but apparently have less ability to control the outcome of a conflict once it has developed.

A somewhat surprising finding lay in the comparison of left-wing and right-wing groups. For one thing, the intensity of the left is much more predictable than that of the right, thereby suggesting more of a flash or idiosyncratic pattern for the latter. Of course some would argue that the views of the right--presumably residing in at least part of the so-called "silent majority"--may not need the explicit articulation of the left in order to be incorporated into school district policies. But our findings also provide a useful corrective to the popular views of social and educational critics that the right-wing is the better-organized,

more spirited participant in school district politics. Issue arousal and disposal were actually much more reflective of left-wing energies than of the right-wing. The prominence of one or the other of these wings probably varies over time. During the late 1960's the left was the more prominent, if our data are a guide.

Finally, there is the notion of the feedback or interaction between issues and organizations. Once an issue is raised, partially as a consequence of group activity, other organizations enter the arena. In using survey research to describe this phenomenon, we are using what amounts to a stop action camera. We get a picture of the situation at a single point in time; therefore, we can do no more than speculate upon the question of issues engendering groups or groups generating issues. We have suggested a pattern of development in which interest groups play the leading role in raising issues, but what is clearly needed is the development of dynamic methods of observation in order to resolve this impasse.

FOOTNOTES

1. Arthur Bentley, The Process of Government (San Antonio, Texas: Principia Press of Trinity University, 1949); David Truman, The Governmental Process (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951).

2. See Lester Milbrath, The Washington Lobbyists (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1963); Raymond A. Bauer, Ithiel de Sola Pool, and Lewis A. Dexter, American Business and Public Policy (New York: Atherton Press, 1963); Harmon Zeigler and Michael A. Baer, Lobbying (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1969).

3. See, for example, Thomas R. Dye, Politics, Economics, and the Public: Policy Outcomes in the American States (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966).

4. Harmon Zeigler, "Interest Groups in the States," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth L. Vines, eds., Politics in the American States (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), pp. 101-147; Lewis A. Froman, Jr., "Some Effects of Interest Group Strength in State Politics," American Political Science Review, 60 (December, 1966), pp. 952-962.

5. Wayne Francis, Legislative Issues in the Fifty States: A Comparative Analysis (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967).

6. Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958).

7. Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," Midwest Journal of Political Science, 13 (February, 1969), pp. 1-32.

8. Salisbury, op. cit.; Mancur L. Olson, Jr., The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

9. Of 84 potential boards from the original sample, 82 are represented. For one board that refused, another was substituted (making 83). For the second board that refused, a board in the original sample was double weighted. Both these decisions were made on the basis of sampling criteria used in the 1965 study.

10. These figures are based upon all mentions, including those which could not be placed within a specific category.

11. Truman, op. cit., p. 51.

12. Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology, 44 (July, 1938), p. 20.

13. Truman, op. cit., p. 29.

14. Joseph C. Palamountain, The Politics of Distribution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955).

15. The addition of 100 was undertaken because the other components of issue arousal ranged from 0 to 100. Since budget defeats and superintendent turnover are dichotomous, the addition of 100 places these variables on the same scale as the other components of the index.